

Nhanda language

Nhanda, also rendered **Nhanta** and **Nhandi**, is an Australian Aboriginal language from the Midwest region of Western Australia, between Geraldton and the Murchison River, from the coast to about 20 kilometres (12 mi) inland. The language is now spoken, or semi-spoken, by only a few people.

The AIATSIS Austlang database says: "According to [Juliette] Blevins (2001:3) three dialects of Nhanda can be identified: Nhanda, the northernmost dialect, **Watchandi** W13, the central dialect, and **Amangu** W12, the southern dialect. Thus Nhanda is both a language name and a dialect name". No speakers are listed in successive tallies since 1975, but the Irra Wangga Language Centre (formerly Yamaji Language Centre) has been working on its revival, originally led by Blevins.^[1] Nanakarti was apparently a distinct language.

While Nhanda is usually considered a member of the Kartu branch of the Pama–Nyungan family,^[4] distinctive features of Nhanda, relative to neighbouring languages have caused some linguists to question this classification,^{[5][6]} and/or classify Nhanda as an isolate.

A controversial hypothesis, first raised by historian Rupert Gerritsen, suggests that the unusual features of Nhanda may result from undocumented language contact during the early modern era, with Dutch – in the form of shipwrecked seafarers stranded in Australia before European settlement had officially begun.^[7] Gerritsen's hypothesis has been rejected by linguist Juliette Blevins,^[8] an authority on Nhanda.

	Nhanda
Native to	Australia
Region	Geraldton to Shark Bay area of Western Australia
Ethnicity	Nhanda
Native speakers	0 (2001) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Pama–Nyungan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kartu?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nhanda–Nhanhagardi<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nhanda</div>
Dialects	<div>Nhanta</div> <div>Watchandi</div> <div>Amangu</div> <div>? Ngukaja / Naaguja</div>
	Language codes
ISO 639-3	nha
Glottolog	nhan1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/id/nhan1238) ^[2]
AIATSIS ^[3]	w14 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/w14)

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Vocabulary

The Nhanda word for 'man, human being' is *arnmanu*. It appears that when Norman Tindale collected information on Nhanda (or on the closely related variety thought to have been spoken in Geraldton) he was given this word, which he recorded as 'Amangu' and believed to be the 'tribal name' for this group.

Phonology

Nhanda differs somewhat from its neighbouring languages in that it has a phonemic glottal stop, is initial-dropping (i.e. it has lost many initial consonants, leading to vowel-initial words) and the stop consonants show a phonemic length contrast.

Vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>High</u>	i i:	u u:
<u>Low</u>	a a:	

Consonants

	<u>Peripheral</u>		<u>Laminal</u>		<u>Apical</u>		<u>Glottal</u>
	<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Retroflex</u>	
<u>Stop</u>	p	k	c	t̪	t	ʈ	ʔ
<u>Nasal</u>	m	ŋ	ɲ	ɳ	n	ɳ	
<u>Lateral</u>			ʎ	ɭ	l	ɭ	
<u>Rhotic</u>					r	ɻ	
<u>Semivowel</u>	w		j				

Language revival

Juliette Blevins, at the time employed at The Australian National University, researched the language in the 1990s and early 2000s in collaboration with the Yamaji Language Centre (now the Irra Wangga Language Centre). An illustrated wordlist and a dictionary are in production. Published works include a sketch grammar of Nhanda (*Nhanda Sketch Grammar*, 2001), as well as papers on its phonology and history.^[9] Doug Marmion has also been working on the language.^[1]

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